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THE
REPORT AND PROCEEDINGS
OF
THE FIRST ANNUAL MEETING
OF THE
PROVIDENCE
ANTI-SLAVERY SOCIETY.

WITH A
**Brief Exposition of the Principles and
Purposes of the Abolitionists.**

PROVIDENCE:
H. H. BROWN, MARKET-SQUARE.
1833.

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FIRST ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

PROVIDENCE ANTI-SLAVERY SOCIETY.

THE PROVIDENCE ANTI-SLAVERY SOCIETY was organized on the 7th of June last. It was then determined that the annual meetings should be held on the second Friday of November. That time has arrived; and although only five months have elapsed since our formation, many events have transpired to encourage us greatly in the work we then began. We associated that we might co-operate together, and with others, in the use of all Christian means for the Abolition of SLAVERY in our land. The glad tidings have since reached us, that, by the persevering use of such means, the philanthropists of Great Britain have at length achieved the overthrow of the same abomination, so long upheld by that government. And we rejoice this day in being able to report that hundreds in our country have espoused the same righteous cause, since the date of our Association. Within the past five months, an Anti-Slavery Society has been formed in Andover, Mass.; another by the Young Men in Boston; a *third* in Portland, Maine; a *fourth* in New Haven; a *fifth* in Plainfield, Conn.; a *sixth* at Hudson, in the Western Reserve, Ohio; a *seventh* in Paint Valley, Ohio; an *eighth* in New York City, and a *ninth* in Pittsburgh, Penn. We have moreover every reason to believe that a National Anti-Slavery Society will be instituted ere long. Numerous excellent tracts

and larger works, on Slavery, have been issued during the brief term of which we have been speaking; and every where throughout our country the newspapers and other periodicals have ventured to broach this hitherto interdicted subject. Well may these things animate us! They do indeed strengthen our hands and encourage our hearts to go on and labor more abundantly in the cause we have espoused.

Are there any here who would damp our ardor by reminding us that every where the project, in which we have engaged, is opposed—the very name we bear cast out as evil, and our sentiments denounced as fanatical, incendiary and treasonable? Let them tell us, if they can, what great moral reformation was ever undertaken, which did not arouse opposition, violent in proportion to the inveteracy of the wickedness to be overborne, and the determination with which its strong holds were assailed! It is indeed the best proof we can have, that the proper means to reform a public vice have been devised, when those who are implicated in that vice are disturbed. How patient and uncomplaining were the votaries and abettors of Intemperance, under the discourses which were from time to time delivered from the pulpit, and the essays which occasionally appeared in our periodicals, upon the sin of drunkenness *in the abstract*. But when the Temperance Association was formed, then was heard the voice of angry opposition—and why? Because, forsooth, that Association struck at the root of the vice, and the blow was felt through all its branches.

When CLARKSON and WILBERFORCE commenced their labors for the suppression of the Slave Trade, they were reviled and execrated. The life even of CLARKSON was repeatedly threatened, and several times in imminent peril, from the malice of his foes, who were the men engaged directly or indirectly in the atrocious traffic he had determined to suppress.

We might adduce several other striking illustrations, but we need mention only the signal example in the history of our Lord Jesus Christ. Though now he is acknowledged by all to have been the Sun of Righteousness, the Anointed of God, the Savior of the world, yet was he despised and rejected of men, and persecuted even unto death, because he preached the truth, exposed wickedness wherever it existed, and labored to redeem men from all their sins.

Let it not then be thought that the opposition which is shown to our project, and the opprobrious epithets that are so liberally bestowed upon those who are engaged in it, are any evidence that the Anti-Slavery cause is unworthy of the patronage of the wisest and best. No. All history shows that the opposite inference ought rather to be drawn.

The only points, upon which rational and moral men can consistently require to be satisfied, are, *first*, whether the principles of the Anti-Slavery Societies are correct and accordant with the Christian religion. *Secondly*, whether the means they propose to use are lawful, worthy and judicious. Every one, whom we call upon to unite with us to abolish Slavery, may very properly demand of us to satisfy them that we are not laboring to disseminate erroneous sentiments, and unnecessarily stirring up strife. What then, let it now be explicitly stated, are our sentiments?

We believe, and would do all in our power to convince others, that "God hath made of *one blood* all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth." The numerous physical, intellectual and moral diversities, which are found to subsist in the human race, we believe to be incidental, not originally inherent. We do not and cannot know what was the complexion, or the stature, or the precise form, of the first parents of mankind; and therefore we cannot know which of all their descendants have depart-

ed most, and which least, from a resemblance to them.

We believe, and would disseminate as widely as possible the belief, that "God is no respecter of persons, but that in every nation he that feareth him and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him." We cannot persuade ourselves that anything else is of so much value in the sight of God, or that anything else should be so highly valued among men as *righteousness*. Incalculable mischief is done to the cause of human happiness, no less than to human virtue, by the undue estimation which is so generally placed upon the possession of wealth, of beauty, of elegant accomplishments, and upon the color of the skin.

We believe, and would do all in our power to persuade our countrymen to believe, that "all men are created free and equal, and are endowed by their Creator with certain *inalienable rights*, among which are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." This momentous doctrine is indeed very solemnly announced in our Declaration of Independence; and our nation vaunts itself as the champion of this doctrine; yet there is not a nation in the world that has so grossly violated the rights of man as we have done, and are doing this moment! More than two millions of our fellow beings, more than one sixth of the inhabitants of this land, are held in the most abject bondage!

We believe, yes, we peremptorily declare, and shall resolutely maintain that no man can have a right of property in *human creatures*. No individual or community can have a good title to the liberty of men, excepting only where liberty has been forfeited to society by crime. This follows as an unavoidable inference, if the previous doctrine be true. If one is self-evident, the other is equally so.

We therefore do not think it enough to call Slavery in the United States a national evil—we denounce it as *an atrocious national sin*—a sin for which we

can offer less excuse than any people on earth—a sin which is bringing upon us the contempt of the world, the high displeasure of Heaven, and, if it be persisted in, must ere long cause our ruin.

We believe that men cannot leave off sinning too soon—that it cannot be dangerous to cease from doing evil at any moment.

We insist that the colored inhabitants of our land have as good a right to the privileges and immunities of American citizens, as any other class of our inhabitants. Those who were born here, i. e. a large proportion of the colored people, are Americans by birth. They are no more Africans, than we are Europeans. The United States is their home, as much as ours. It is heinous wickedness, it is cruel persecution, in us so to treat them as to make them wish to flee from their country. And to insist, that their removal from the land of their birth should be the condition of their emancipation from Slavery, is an outrageous violation of our most sacred civil as well as religious principles. All the colored people who possess the qualifications which are demanded of others, ought to be admitted forthwith to the enjoyment of the same privileges, and the exercise of the same prerogatives as others. And all of them who do not possess such qualifications, ought to have every facility afforded for attaining them as soon as possible. They ought not to be held as property, and treated as brutes a moment longer. All laws derogatory to them as rational and moral beings, ought to be repealed. They should no longer be left at the mercy of their petty tyrants—liable to be bought and sold like cattle—denied the protection of public justice—withheld from the lights of knowledge and of religion. They should be in subjection only to the civil arm—and that arm ought to hold over them and their white brethren *the equal scale of justice*. The life and liberty of colored men should be as sacred as our own ;

and they ought to be fitted as soon as they may be to exercise and enjoy all the prerogatives of freemen. These changes in their condition surely cannot be effected too soon. Let therefore such measures only be adopted, as will tend *directly* to produce them. Let us not temporize about the highest interests—the inalienable rights of more than two millions of the inhabitants of our land!!

Such are our principles. Is there one of them which any rational man, especially if he be a Christian, will venture to controvert?

We now proceed to the inquiry of those, who demand of us by what *means* we propose to accomplish our purposes? We answer, by means precisely like those which have been employed with so much effect towards the subversion of Intemperance. We propose to circulate Tracts urging upon the consciences of our fellow-citizens the heinous wickedness of Slavery—exposing the perpetual injustice, and the occasional cruelties which are tolerated and enforced by the laws of our land—exhibiting also without a veil the loathsome vices which are prevalent wherever the Institution of Slavery is upheld.

We intend, so soon as we may be able, to send out living agents to cry aloud and spare not, to lift up their voices like trumpets, and show this people their great transgressions, and the fearful calamities which impend over them.

Respecting Slavery in the District of Columbia, and other portions of our territory, which are under the immediate government of Congress, we mean to petition Congress, and reiterate our petitions year after year, until at least the place where our national legislators convene, is purified. We shall labor, in co-operation with others, so to correct public opinion, and arouse public feeling in New England, that she will utter herself in the cause of the oppressed, as it would become her to do; and instruct her Repre-

sentatives in Congress on all occasions to announce her sentiments, and urge her wishes in opposition to Slavery.

Thus it will be seen that we rely wholly on *moral power*—the *power of the truth*. Who is there that will dare say this is not a proper, legitimate, Christian-like, republican mode of proceeding? Is not this the mode provided in the very Constitution of the United States, by which we are to correct the evils, that may exist under the government, of which that Constitution is the basis; or even to amend the defects of that instrument itself? Is not the freedom of speech and of the press secured to us in that charter of our liberties? Is it not acknowledged by all, who understand the genius of a republican government, that the right of thinking for ourselves, and of speaking, writing and printing our opinions, is fundamental? Without this, the evils, which are incident to this form of society, cannot be corrected; no—nor our freedom long preserved.

The Anti-Slavery Societies wish for no other means than these. We have hitherto used only these; nor can we ever have need to resort to any other.

Our numbers, in this Providence Society, are comparatively, few; but we have not therefore been idle nor timid in our appropriate sphere of duty. Assured of the justice of our cause, we have labored in it as we were able. Our first public meeting was held on the 4th of July, when an Address was delivered in the afternoon in this city, by Rev. Thomas Williams, and repeated in the evening of the same day, at Pawtucket. The audiences assembled at both places were highly respectable; and a collection of about twenty dollars was taken in aid of our funds.

The next quarterly meeting of the Society was held on the 13th of September, when a public address was delivered by Rev. Samuel J. May, of Brooklyn.

We have purchased and distributed one hundred

copies of Stuart's "West India Question," a pamphlet published in England, showing in the most conclusive manner, the duty, safety and good economy of the Immediate Emancipation of Slaves. Also, one hundred copies of "Prejudice Vincible," a letter from James Cropper of Liverpool to the venerable Clarkson, showing that the prejudices against our colored brethren may be and ought to be overcome. Also, one hundred and sixty-eight copies of Rankin's Letters, exposing some of the abominations of Slavery in our own country. Besides these, we have distributed several hundreds of other tracts, which have been given us by benevolent individuals; and we have lately ordered four hundred copies of J. G. Whittier's excellent pamphlet entitled "Justice and Expediency."

Such, friends and fellow-citizens, is our Report. In conclusion, we beg of you to examine thoroughly the Tracts we have issued—and, scrutinize, as closely as you may, every sentiment contained in them. We shrink not from the investigation of our opinions. If they are erroneous, let it be made to appear as soon as possible.

We intreat those of you who are thoroughly convinced of the correctness of our views and sentiments, to come without delay and unite with us to deliver more than *two millions* of our countrymen from Slavery and degradation; and redeem our beloved country from her greatest iniquity.

PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

FIRST ANNUAL MEETING

OF THE

PROVIDENCE ANTI-SLAVERY SOCIETY,

Holden at Mechanics' Hall, in Providence, on the 4th day
of November, 1833.

The meeting was called to order by the President at half past six o'clock.

The proceedings of the last meeting were read by the Secretary.

The Executive Committee then presented their Annual Report which was read and unanimously accepted.

The following Resolution was presented by Rev. Thomas Williams, to wit :

Resolved, That the immediate and unconditional Abolition of Slavery throughout the United States is imperiously demanded, not less for the national safety, than by the dictates of Republicanism and Philanthropy.

The meeting was addressed by Rev. Mr. Williams, after which the Resolution was seconded and supported by Rev. George Bourne, of New York city, and unanimously passed.

The following Resolution was presented by Mr. Charles C. Burleigh, of Brooklyn, Conn. to wit :

Resolved, That the pretence of the Colonization Society to be in intention and effect an Anti-Slavery Society, is false and unfounded.

Mr. Burleigh addressed the meeting at some

length, in support of this Resolution, which was seconded and passed with one dissenting voice.

The following Resolution was offered by Mr. Bourne, to wit:

Resolved, That the improvement of the condition of the colored people in the United States is a debt of vast magnitude, which is owing by us to that class of American citizens, the full and prompt payment of which is enforced by all the claims of justice and the Christian religion.

On the passage of this Resolution, Rev. Mr. Bourne addressed the meeting in an energetic and able manner, and the Resolution passed unanimously.

The following gentlemen were then elected Officers of the Society, to wit:

PRESIDENT,

MR. JOSIAH CADY.

VICE-PRESIDENT,

REV. RAY POTTER.

TREASURER,

MR. JOHN PRENTICE.

CORRESPONDING SECRETARY.

MR. GILBERT RICHMOND.

RECORDING SECRETARY.

MR. HENRY E. BENSON.

COUNSELLORS,

MESSRS. HENRY CUSHING,
MARTIN ROBINSON,
WYLLYS AMES,
WILBOR TILLINGHAST
JOHN EDWIN BROWN

The meeting was then adjourned

CONSTITUTION.

WE the undersigned, believe that a difference in the human complexion forms no just exception to the principle which assumes that "all men are created equal, and are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights." Hence, we believe, that every slave is entitled to immediate emancipation from bondage; and that the people of color are entitled to the same natural and political privileges with other persons.

And since our colored brethren and sisters, with few exceptions, are in no condition to assert their own rights, we believe it to be the solemn duty of those who are in the full enjoyment of these sacred privileges, to advocate their cause by all peaceful and lawful measures. Other means than these we disclaim, and will give no countenance to violence or insurrection. With such views and intentions, we agree to form ourselves into a Society, under the following Constitution.

ARTICLE 1. The Society shall be called the PROVIDENCE ANTI-SLAVERY SOCIETY.

ART. 2. The objects of the Society shall be to endeavor by all means sanctioned by law, humanity and religion, to effect the immediate Abolition of Slavery in the United States—to improve the character of the free people of color—to inform and correct public opinion in relation to their situation and rights—and to obtain for them equal civil and political privileges with the white inhabitants of the land.

ART. 3. Any person by signing the Constitution, and paying the Treasurer twenty-five dollars as a life subscription, or one dollar annually, shall be a member of the Society.

ART. 4. There shall be a President, Vice-President, Treasurer, Corresponding Secretary, Recording Secretary and five Counsellors, who shall perform all the duties usually incident to the respective offices. They shall be annually chosen by ballot at the regular meeting of the Society in November. These ten officers shall together constitute an Executive Committee, authorized to fill vacancies in their own number, five of whom shall form a quorum, to carry into effect the resolutions of the Society and manage its funds, subject in all cases to the control and direction of the Society.

ART. 5. There shall be in each year a regular meeting of the Society on the second Friday of every month from September to April inclusive, and on the fourth day of July; special meetings may be called by the officers when they shall judge it necessary, or on application to them from seven members in writing. Thirteen members shall constitute a quorum to transact business.

ART. 6. The Constitution may be altered, with the exception of the second article, at any regular meeting of the Society, by a vote of two thirds of the members present, or a majority of all the members, such alteration having been proposed at the preceding regular meeting.

The attention of the British public having been drawn to the American Colonization Society, by a recent visit from one of its agents, several distinguished statesmen and philanthropists availed of the occasion to make the following expression of their opinion of its merits.

PROTEST.

We the undersigned, having observed with regret that the "*American Colonization Society*" appears to be gaining some adherents in this country, are desirous to express our opinions respecting it.

Our motive and excuse for thus coming forward are the claims which the Society has put forth to *Anti-Slavery* support. These opinions are, in our opinion, wholly groundless, and we feel bound to affirm, that our deliberate judgment and conviction are, that the professions made by the Colonization Society of promoting the abolition of Slavery, are altogether delusive.

As far as the mere Colony of Liberia is concerned, it has no doubt advantages of other trading establishments. In this sense, it is beneficial both to America and to Africa, and we cordially wish it well. We never required of that country to assist us in Sierra Leone; we are heavily burdened by our own connection with Slavery; and we do maintain that we ought not to be called on to contribute to the expenses of a Colony, which, though no doubt comprising some advantages, was formed chiefly to indulge the prejudices of American Slave-holders, and which is regarded with aversion by the colored population of the United States.

With regard to the extinction of the Slave Trade, we apprehend that Liberia, however good the intentions of its supporters, will be able to do little or nothing towards it, except on the limited extent of its own territories. The only effectual death blow to that accursed traffic, will be the destruction of slavery throughout the world. To the destruction of slavery throughout the world, we are compelled to say that we believe the Colonization Society to be an obstruction.

Our objections to it are, therefore, briefly these:—While we believe its prettexts to be delusive, we are convinced that its *real* effects are of the most dangerous nature. It takes its root from a cruel prejudice and alienation in the whites of America against the colored people, slave or free. This being its source, the effects are what might be expected; that it fosters and increases the spirit of caste, already so unhappily predominant: that it widens the breach between the two races—exposes the colored people to great practical persecu-

tion, in order to *force* them to emigrate ; and finally is calculated to swallow up and divert that feeling which America as a Christian and free country, cannot but entertain, that slavery is alike incompatible with the law of God, and with the well being of man, whether of the enslaver or the enslaved.

On these grounds, therefore, and while we acknowledge the Colony of Liberia, or any other colony on the coast of Africa, to be *in itself* a good thing, we must be understood utterly to repudiate the principles of the American Colonization Society. That Society is, in our estimation, not deserving of the countenance of the British public.

WM. WILBERFORCE,	SUFFIELD,
WM. SMITH,	S. LUSHINGTON, M. P.
ZACKARY MACAULY,	THOS. FOWELL BUXTON, M. P.
WM. EVENS, M. P.	JAMES CROPPER,
SAMUEL GURNEY,	WILLIAM ALLEN,
GEORGE STEPHEN,	DANIEL O'CONNELL, M. P.

London, July, 1833.

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